





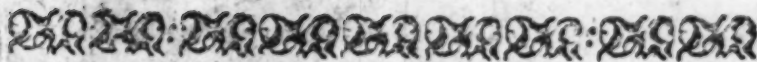


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# ESSAY

O N

Conjugal Infidelity, &c.



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AN  
ESSAY  
ON

*Conjugal Infidelity:*

S H E W I N G

The great Mischiefs that  
Attend, those that Defile  
the Marriage Bed.

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*Secrets of Marriage still are Sacred held ;  
Their Sweet and Bitter by the Wise conceal'd :  
Errors of Wives reflect on Husbands still ;  
And when divulg'd proclaim they've chosen ill :  
And the Mysterious Pow'r of Bed and Throne  
Should always be maintain'd, but rarely shewn.  
Dry.*

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L O N D O N :

Printed for T. W A R N E R, at the  
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1835



THE  
MISCHIEFS  
OF  
CONJUGAL INFIDELITY.

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WAS a false and ground-  
less Character which was  
given by the great Scaliger,  
of the *English* Nation,  
That *they were a People*  
*Cruel and Inhospitable, perfect Self-*  
*Admirers, and Contemnners of all the*  
*World besides.* For if we consider  
either the Nature of our Laws, or  
A 3 the

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the Genius of our Religion, which are founded both of them upon the Rules of Equity and Indulgence, we must needs conclude the Temper of the English to be a perfect Contradiction to both these, if it is not treatable and human. They may indeed sometimes be fierce, but then 'tis in their own Defence: And if they are inhospitable, 'tis only to such as would make a Prey of their Civility. For how many Strangers quit their Native Soil, to enjoy the Pleasure of a more Indulgent English Clime? And Foreign Merchants crowd our Streets in such Numbers, as if London were the Mistress and universal Patroness of Traffick through the World. But if Men approach them in an hostile way, there is no reason they should meet with Hospitality, or be treated otherwise than with a Martial English Bravery, which is highly necessary for their own Defence and Preservation: For their main Bulwark is their Native Valour; and their Men of War, their only Alps and Pyrenean Hills.

## Conjugal Infidelity. 7

*Hills.* And to say that *they are Self-Admirers*, is very weak, since if they should not love themselves, they ought to be *hated* of all the World besides. I only wish their *Conjugal Love* were as sincere and genuine, as is their *Friendliness* to *Strangers*, and as little liable to Exceptions as their *Cruelty*. Then many silent *Complaints* against *Matrimonial Infidelity* would cease; then would not those Solemn, Sacred *Ties* be so wilfully *violated* and *prophan'd*, so frequently made an occasion to *Lewdness*, and sacrific'd so impiously to all *Immodesty* and *Lust*. For how often is *Marriage* made only a *Cloak* to *Impurity*? And that dazzling *Beauty* which before commanded *Respect* and *Admiration* by its *Innocence*, is under that *Religious Cover* expos'd a *Prostitute* to every wanton *Eye*. Would but the *Modesty* of our *Women* keep pace with the *Fortitude* of our *Men*; and the *Bashfulness* and *Purity* of Those, equalize the *Courage* and *Hardness* of These, how valuable should



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should we be at *Home*, as well as formidable *Abroad*! Then would it be difficult to determine which of these two Qualities would most recommend us to the Esteem of the World; whether we should more be fam'd for a Nation of *Lucretia's*, or for a standing Race of *Heroes*.

*Obj.* But the Women will be apt to say, That were there no *Attacks*, there would then be no *Victory*: Did not the *Importunities* of the *Men* provoke the *Modesty* of the *Women*, there would be no *Surrender* of their *Chastity*: And how is it possible for such a weak *Defence* as Women are qualified to make, to be able to withstand their repeated *Onsets*? But yet as weak, as it is, without *Consent* the general *Attempts* would be very fruitless and unsuccessful, and no more than the storming a Wall of *Brass* with *Tennis Balls*. It is an Observation upon this *Island*, That no *Continent* has been oftner, perhaps, *Conquered*, than it has been: And yet  
the

## Conjugal Infidelity. 9

The *History* takes notice, That it had always a *Hand* in its own *Conquests*; and by the means of some corrupt *Party* within, was basely betray'd to its own *Overthrow*.

*Ans.* And let the *Women* but guard their *Honour* with inward *Resolutions*, and not harbour in their Minds a *Treacherous Passion* to yield to *Amorous Glances* and *Insinuations*, and they may still bravely maintain their *Ground*, and fairly defy all *Onsets* and *Surprizals*. But since the *Weak Sex* have render'd themselves much weaker, by the frequent *Conquests* that are made over them; and the *Malignity* of their *Effeminacy* ripens daily towards an *Universal Contagion*, it will be very necessary to represent the various *Mischiefs* of this spreading *Evil*: That the *Piety* and *Wisdom* of the *Nation* may prescribe such proper *Remedies* as may retard at least, if not totally prevent all the *Danger* of it; and that as well in the *Men*, who

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are

## 10 *The Mischiefs of*

are equally guilty, as in the Female Sex.

In *India* formerly an *Elephant* was esteem'd and allow'd as a valuable *Gift* to a Married Woman, to debase herself, and corrupt her *Chastity*. And *Solon* is recorded to have been the first in *Greece*, who by his Laws permitted Women to prostitute themselves for Necessities of Life. 'Twere well that our Women were to be bounded only by these Laws: We might then expect some Abatement of their Impurity, either by the Rarity of that Animal, or by confining that Sin to such only as are in Want.

And that we may not by our Silence be any longer accessory, as it were, to this odious Vice, which is now grown so universal, let us consider a-while those various fatal Mischiefs which attend it. And those are,

*First,*

## Conjugal Infidelity. II

*First*, Such as are the Natural Consequences and Effects of it; some of which have so near an Affinity to Corruption, that they forestall a Natural Dissolution, and prevent the Rottness of the Grave: And render the Person that is distemper'd so very loathsome and offensive, that as they were formerly too familiar with others, so they are scarce able now to converse with themselves: They look as if they were spawn'd from the *Dead Sea*, or were a Limb of *Sodom* and *Gomorrha*. So long has Reason lain asleep, and Conscience been check'd and aw'd to Silence, that the very Body now is forc'd to serve as a Monitor to the Soul, to supply its place, and take its turn to conduct the Mind to Reformation, and to endure several *Corporeal* Pangs and Throws, for Neglect of Anguish and Remorse of Spirit. But this nauseous Evil does not always rest here, but sometimes descends to a loathsome Offspring, and corrupts the very Innocence of



## 12 *The Mischiefs of*

Childhood: It intails such Sickness and Diseases upon Posterity, as make them with themselves unborn, or that they had been stifled at the Birth. So desirable a Blessing is this which the vicious Parent propagates to the Son.

And certainly if this Lustful Fire be not quench'd, or else be timely restrain'd, 'twill soon emasculate the Age, consume the Strength, and melt down the Courage of the Nation. 'Twill serve instead of a Thousand Enemies to foil and overthrow the Kingdom, when it has brought our Men to be as Lascivious as *Satyrs*, and as Impotent as *Pygmies*. A *French* Army will not be half so Formidable as some Hundreds of *English* *Messalina's*, who will top upon the greatest Gallantry, and sink the Braveness of our Spirits more than all their Legions and Battalions. If we design to maintain our Martial Valour, for which we are now renown'd thro' the World, we



## Conjugal Infidelity. 13

we must keep at a Distance from *Venus* Tents. An Effeminate Hero resembles a Ball of Wildfire, expiring in the Air without any Resistance or Execution: He is truly qualified for Gallant Atchievements; but those tender Indearments he meets with in the Fair Sex exhaust all his Fire and Strength, and render him very insignificant and useless.

'Twas a most excellent Observation of *Juvenal*, concerning the Ruin and Declination of Ancient *Rome*,

—*Sævior Armis*

*Luxuria incubuit, victumq; ulciscitur  
orbem.*

When the vanquish'd World had nothing left to revenge it self on conquering *Rome*, its own Luxury became its Overthrow, and was more victorious over it self, than any Foreign Power or Arms. And while Effeminacy triumphs among our Men of Arms, *England's* Lawrels, of necessity

## 14 *The Mischiefs of*

ty must wither. The Ancient *Gauls* recommended Continency till a full and vigorous Age to all their Men design'd for War, because they observ'd that Women were apt to abate and divert their Courage. And the *Greek History* observes to us, That all such as design'd for Victory in the Olympick Games, took care not to converse for some time before with any Women.

But this Vice not only dissolves the Courage and emasculates the Spirits, but it entails upon the Issue generally very wild and extravagant Passions. And the Lust and Lasciviousness of the Parents runs frequently in the Child's Veins; 'tis rooted in the Constitution, and mixt with the very Spirits and Blood. And therefore 'tis the Wisdom of all Persons in their *Conjugal Elections*, to see that those they chuse be of a well-descended Nature; that they may be able to pronounce that of themselves, which the Great *Alexander* did;

## Conjugal Infidelity. 15

did, That *his Virtues he had by Nature,*  
*but his Vices came by Chance.*

And since most Men marry with a Design of securing to themselves an Issue, as well as pleasing of themselves, both these good Ends by an inordinate Lust are quite defeated: For this by a Natural Cause prevents Conception, and by consequence must stifle all Hopes of Children in the Womb. The beaten Paths are always barren, and never productive of any Fruit. This *common way* of living would be apt to put an End to the Noblest Family, though even the House of *Austria* depended on it. And indeed, whatever springs from an Adulterous Bed is rarely of a long continuance. Of that we may affirm what the Poet does of unjustly-acquir'd Riches, *Ex male quaesitis, &c.* Ill-gotten Children, as well as Wealth, seldom continue to the Third Generation. And thus the Two Principal Ends of Matrimony are utterly baffled and confuted, by frequent  
Matri-

## 16 *The Mischiefs of*

Matrimonial Lewdness, and Adulterous Conversation, which both confound the Nuptial Joys and Satisfaction, and extinguish also Lineal Descents, in putting an invincible *Non Ultra* upon the Progeny of the Meanest, as well as the most Ancient House.

The next great Evil which attends *Conjugal Licentiousness* and *Impurity*, is the Plague of *Jealousy*; a Passion which blows hot and cold at once: 'Tis a kind of compound of Light and Darkness, of Pain and Pleasure; that constrains a Man to Hate and Abominate That which he mightily inclines to Admire and Love. 'Tis of such an Aguish Disposition, that while it pretends to warm the Spirit with Kindness and Affection, it freezes it again with Coldness and Neglect. It puts a Man into such a tremulous Condition and Suspense, that he can neither freely embrace his Wife, nor yet think of parting with her freely, but it bandies his Mind continually

## Conjugal Infidelity. 17

to and fro, in a Sea of Inconstancy and Hesitation. And what is more intolerable than to be wounded in the most tender part; than for the Delight of the Eyes to be made the Grief of the Heart, and to live confin'd continually to Disquietude and Vexation? And certainly, except that some Restraint could be put upon the too just Cause of this tormenting Passion, it seems better much that several Persons should answer as *Thales* did his Mother concerning Marriage, who told her, *When he was Young, it was too soon to marry; when he was Old, it was too late.* *Lepidus*, we are assur'd expir'd with Grief, because of the Incontinency of his Wife: I heartily wish that he were the only Martyr of this kind of Discontent, and the last that fell a Victim to this sort of Dissatisfaction; which is a Torment so intolerable, that the very Animals are impatient under this Pressure, and enrag'd to be rival'd in their Amours. And there is nothing certainly that



## 18 *The Mischiefs of*

ferments the Mind to a greater pitch of Anger and Resentment, than those vexatious Thoughts inspir'd by Jealousy.

But it is not enough for those that are married thus, to consume the Eyes, and waste the Souls of such as are injur'd, with Discontent; but they likewise quarry very often upon the Fortune, and maintain their Consumptive Lusts at a large Expence. What Care and Frugality had for a long time hoarded up, that Prodigality in a very short time makes a shift to lavish away: What was laboriously collected in the Day-time, is often either by the one or the other as idly wasted and expended at Night; till the Nests of the Mistresses and Gallants are richly feather'd with their Substance. And in this they too nearly moralize the Fable of the *Danaides*, condemning themselves to put their Money in a Bag with Holes; as those Daughters of *Danaus* were punish'd in *Hell* with filling Water in a Tub

## Conjugal Infidelity. 19

a Tub without a Bottom. Of this we have a late memorable Instance among our Nobility here at Home, besides many more less-Illustrious Examples which might be produc'd: For *within Three Years which happen'd between the late Dukes (Norfolk's) Death, and the parting the new Duke and Dutches, she run him out by Extravagant Expences 30000 l. above his Income; to pay which, oblig'd him to sell his Life, 2400 l. per Ann. out of his Estate in Sussex and Yorkshire. [See the Duke of Norfolk's Case.]* This is one main Reason among the rest, that Men in this discreet Age, as they call it, keep at so great a Distance from the Ties of Wedlock, that with the *Essenians* they will rather chuse to extinguish the Succession of Men, than beget them in a Married State; or if they do, 'tis rather for the Love of Wealth than of the Woman, and so make a Marriage of Bodies without Souls. And when they are tied together thus very loosely, and the Married Pair, as to any Cordial Love and

C 2 Affection,

## 20 *The Miscbiefs of*

Affection, continue still in a Single State, what tolerable degrees of In-dearments and Friendship can possibly be expected from them; since they vow'd that with their Mouth which their Mind disown'd; and tied that with the Tongue, which they never consented to with the Heart? From whence proceed those Rumours daily of so many Skirmishes and Domestick Discords, of such Broils and Dissentions in several Families, which are perfect Epitomes of a Civil War, and nothing but Nurseries of Feuds and Discontent; which render a Wilderness more desirable than a Palace, and a Bed of Rushes more easy than a Bed of Down. And while these are the Effects of Matrimonial Engagements, and the wretched Consequence and horrid Result of those Sacred Vows, no wonder that the Poet's Choice should be the general Motto of this loose Age, *Gall. Ele. 1.*

*Et mihi dulce magis resoluto vivere collo.*

*Nothing*

## Conjugal Infidelity. 21

*Nothing agrees more with my Mind,  
Than Liberty that's unconfin'd.*

But that which highly aggravates this Crime, and renders it far more unpardonable in the Married Persons, is, that they are under a most solemn Contract, and indissoluble Obligation to the contrary; and yet they venture without Restraint, and resolutely break all those holy Bonds asunder. So that what is remark'd of the happy Situation of our Island, That in respect of Commerce it enjoys this extraordinary Advantage of lying open to all the Parts of the World, may with Shame and Confusion be pronounc'd of the unhappy Temper of our loose Gallants, who expose themselves so commonly to all Strangers, and drive so general a Traffick with all kind of People: For Confirmation of which, though we cannot justly pronounce it to be true in all Cases, we need but observe the strange Diversity of Children that are  
often

## 22      *The Mischiefs of*

often seen in one and the same House, and are thought all to belong to the same Parents. This Child is naturally as Fair as that Lady whom *Horace* describes to be endow'd with a *vultus nimium lubricus aspicit*: That other is a perfect Dowdy, and as Black as any *Spaniard*. Here you may see one Plump, and shap'd like a *Dutch Skipper*; There another Tall, and Slender wasted, like the Monument. One is Sanguine, another is Pale; Here's a Dwarf, and there's a Giant: This is Surly, and that is nothing but Complaisance. They are all as like one another, as a Peasant is a Lord; and as like the Father, as a rough *Tartar* is a smooth *Italian*: So that if you consider the Children all distinctly, you would really fancy that half *Europe* had clubb'd to make up one Family. But herein Charity advises us not to pass our Judgments rashly; because such Diversities may sometimes proceed from Legitimate Congress. And this unlawful Freedom not only corrupts the Strain, and  
allays



## Conjugal Infidelity. 23

allays the Lineal current Descent with spurious Mixture and a base Breed, but derives likewise a lasting Mark of Infamy upon the Children, stigmatizes their Character, and libels their Repute and Credit in the World. Now if Men are so careful of preserving the Breed of their Beasts pure, especially such as are remarkable for any Excellence, that they will not endure a Mixture from any of a different kind, for fear of altering of the Strength or Shape, or abating of some good and eminent Quality ; should not then as tender a Regard be had for Families, for securing them from being adulterated and stain'd with False Amours, and Illegitimate Conceptions, and being made a Medley of contrary Humours, and disagreeable Genius's and Dispositions? And no Parent that had the least Respect either for the Honour of the Family, or the Comfort and Reputation of the Children, but would chuse rather a thousand times to dye Childless, than have them brought into

## 24 *The Mischiefs of*

into the World with such a Train of Miseries attending them.

We may add to this the hainous Injustice which is done to the next Heir, of cutting him out of all his Pretensions, and robbing him of all those Privileges and Profits, to which he had an undeniable Claim : Whereby a Nobleman of the best Family may be supplanted by an obscure Person of the meanest, if the Woman prove unchaste and false, for want of Issue from the Marriage Bed. And this I am afraid is none of the least Reasons of the apparent Degeneracy of some Ancient Families in the Nation. 'Tis true indeed, the Men in these Cases are as bad as the Women, they are equally as guilty of Matrimonial Inconstancy as their Wives ; but then the Husband cannot bring in an Illegitimate Child into the Family ; he cannot by that means strike out the next Lawful Heir, and basely deprive him of his Birthright. This is wholly owing to the unlawful Familiarity of  
Wives,

## Conjugal Infidelity. 25

Wives, and is an Evil in them of the first Magnitude, being compounded both of abominable Treachery and Injustice. And therefore to preserve the Succession in a right Line, that no base Child may deprive the Lawful Heir of his just Privileges, 'tis an Ancient Custom in several Places of the *East*, as well as in *Africk*, That the Heirship of Families runs all along on the Mother's side, as being least liable to Sophistry and Imposition. So that if once the Nativity be allow'd, the proper Father is never question'd. In *Rome*, formerly, Three of *Lepidus's* Relations were born with a *Cartilage* upon the Right Eye, as a distinctive Mark of that Family to which they belong'd. And were all the Families in *England* to be trac'd at the same rate, and every Child in the Nation affix'd to its Genuine Father, what a Numerous Brood would be found in some Houses, that are now destitute of Children? And how many Persons that feed and educate Variety of Children

## 26 *The Mischiefs of*

as their own, would then be really left almost Childless?

Besides these odious Civil Consequences, there are abundance of Religious Evils which this Conjugal Libertinism produces, which was a Vice so detestable among the Jews, that Death is pronounc'd the infallible Penalty of it, Deut. xx. 10. *And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that commits adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and adulteress shall surely be put to Death.* And were this Law in England as frequently executed as it is transgress'd, it would in some measure unpeople us, I am afraid, as much as either the last Plague, or the late War has done, and mightily increase the Accounts of Mortality among us. And that this is a Vice of that intoxicating Nature, that Men are but rarely drawn off from it, we have Solomon's Testimony, Prov. ii. 19. *None that go in unto her (the Lewd Woman) return again, neither*

## Conjugal Infidelity. 27

*neither take they hold of the paths of life.*

Chap. vii. 27. *Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death.*

No Dungeon is half so dangerous and dismal as her Apartments, notwithstanding all their splendid Gaiety.

And that wise King, who smarted so severely under their Enchantments, because he was too familiar with their ways, has with as much Freedom as Severity kindly given caution against too much Confidence in them, in that Sentence of his, which looks as sharp as any Satyr that was written against them, Eccles. vii 28. *One man among a thousand have I found, but a woman among all those have I not found.*

No, not even among the Seven Hundred Wives that were Princesses, and those Three Hundred Concubines which he chose to compleat his Thousand. But this can be no just Reflection upon the Innocent Conversation of our Ladies; among whom I question not but there are now several of as rigid Continence and Virtue, as there were in any Age since his Time.



## 28 *The Mischiefs of*

'Twas in the late Reigns that this Abominable Iniquity came to be so Epidemic an *English* Vice. The People of *Israel* follow'd the Sins of *Jeroboam*; and *Regis ad exemplum*, &c. were the Sins of —, who made *England* to sin. And unless the *Great Council of the Nation* shall think fit to do something as remarkable for the Suppression of that Abomination, as has been done for the Encouragement of it, we must still stand in Fear of its ominous Growth, and justly dread the fatal Consequences of its Increase among us. That it will, if not restrain'd, produce at length a Storm of very heavy Judgments upon us, we may verily believe, from that severe Indignation which the Almighty has frequently express'd against this Wickedness; and that not only in threatening with future, but inflicting present Plagues. He styles himself *slow to Anger*, and is unapt to show his Resentments on a sudden; but yet at length he strikes home; as the Poet tells us,

## Conjugal Infidelity. 29

Ὅψε θεῶν ἀλεῖσι μύλοι, ἀλεῖσι δὲ λείψα.

*Mills of the Gods do slowly grind,  
But they at length to Powder grind.*

And therefore Job comforts himself with the Remembrance of his Innocence and Integrity, and the Assurance he had of not smarting for this Sin, which he reckons to be extremely pernicious and destructive: Job xxxi. 9, 10, 11, 12. *If my heart has been deceiv'd by a woman, or if I have laid wait at my neighbour's door; then let my wife grind unto another, and let others bow down upon her. For this is an heinous crime; yea, it is an iniquity to be punish'd by the judges: For it is a fire that consumeth to destruction, and would root out all my Increase. He thought it so far from adding any thing to his Family, that it would certainly exterminate and extinguish those Blessings whereof he had been already possess'd; and that it would diminish his Comforts instead of making an Increase*

## 30 *The Mischiefs of*

crease to them And doubtless whatever Felicities any Persons can pretend to from such filthy unlawful Practices, the Miseries will in all respects far over-balance and outweigh them, and produce a Train of lasting and very grievous Evils, for those short and vanishing Delights. And many Nations besides the *Jews* have been possess'd with so irreconcilable an Odium and utter Detestation against all Adulterous Conversation, that they doom'd the Commission of it to as Capital a Punishment as the *Jews* did, and sentenc'd the Guilty Persons unto Death.

At *Pulo, Condore, and Pegu*; at *Siam, Cochinchina, Cambodia* and *Guinea*, the Natives are so obliging to Strangers, as to offer them the Use of Women, though not of their Wives. And yet what Heathens disavow'd, is very shamefully practis'd by Christians; and what the Husband is utterly averse to, That the Wife chuses, against all the Laws of Matrimonial

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## Conjugal Infidelity. 31

Endearments, the natural Violence of whose Lust breaks too often through all the various and strong Restraints of Fear and Honour, which by a Wise Providence were contriv'd as Bars to their Chastity, and plac'd as Guardians to their Modesty.

It was Five Hundred and Twenty Years after *Rome* was built, before ever that renown'd and flourishing City heard of a Divorce among her People. And when *Spurious Carbilias* dismiss'd his Wife upon the account of her Sterility, for he had no Argument against her of Matrimonial Impurity, yet he receiv'd a sound Re-proof for the Action; and was told, 'That the desire of Children ought to give place to Conjugal Obligations: *Val. Max. lib. 2. cap. 1.* 'Tis not either for the Barrenness of the Women, or the Natural Coldness of the Men, that Divorces are so much requested among us, as for their loose unlawful Behaviour to one another. Those Natural unavoidable Infirmities

## 32 *The Mischiefs of*

ties do plead for Excuse, and are sometimes pardon'd where the Affections are entire and ardent: But this Matrimonial Inconstancy is a Vice of that Malignity, that it poysons the Kindness of the most Cordial, and cools the most Sanguine Husband or Wife into Indifference, and oftentimes Averfation.

The Almighty was so averfe to unlawful Issues under the *Mosaical* Dispensation, that he declares, *Deut. xxiii.*

2. *A bastard shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord; even to his tenth generation shall he not enter into the congregation of the Lord:* That is, as the *Hebrew* Doctors expound it, Never. And the Reason which they give for it, is this, That Persons might be deterr'd from such Marriages as would leave an indelible Mark of Infamy upon Posterity. And the Wise Son of *Syrac* has in few words express'd the several great Evils that attend the Violation of Matrimonial Fidelity, in the Woman particularly,

*Ecclesi*



## Conjugal Infidelity. 33

*Ecclus. xxiii. 22, &c. Thus shall it go also with the wife that leaves her husband, and brings in an heir by another. For First, She has disobey'd the law of the most High. And Secondly, She has trespass'd against her own husband. And Thirdly, She has play'd the whore in adultery, and brought children by another man. She shall be brought out into the congregation, and inquisition shall be made of her children. Her children shall not take root, and her branches shall bring forth no fruit. She shall leave her memory to be curs'd, and her reproach shall not be blotted out. And they that remain shall know, that there is nothing better than the fear of the Lord, and that there is nothing sweeter than to take heed to the commandments of the Lord.*

Now since the Zeal and Conduct of the High Court of Parliament have done such Miracles for the Safety of the Nation, have conquer'd Difficulties that seem'd insuperable in Time of War, and have since appeas'd all the Publick Clamours of

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## 34 *The Mischiefs of*

Discontent in time of Peace ; surely it would not be a Matter unworthy their Thoughts and Consideration, to reflect upon the Numerous Mischiefs which this too common Conjugal Inconstancy produces; and prescribe such Antidotes as might timely put a stop to it. What a Glory will this add to all those Mighty Things which they have already done? And how many Thousand Families in *England* will think themselves obliged to call them for ever Blessed for it? And blessed they must needs be, who make their Authority a Terror to all Iniquity, and take care that Vice should never trample upon their Power, nor a Wickedness so daring, so mischievous, and odious as this, should ever pass any longer without a due Censure, and just Punishment. Were this Effeminate Liberty but effectually suppress'd by their Wise Determinations, what a lovely Alteration would it produce throughout the whole Kingdom! And how many Injur'd Persons, whose Tempers are now dejected

## Conjugal Infidelity. 35

jected with private Grief and Discontent, would then have them turn'd immediately into a pleasant Chearfulness and Satisfaction? Our Men would then be more Hale and Vigorous, more Active and Hardy than now they are, and not to be enervated with Effeminacy, and subdued with sharp Pains and Diseases of Lust; nor yet be rack'd with violent and impetuous Passions deriv'd from the deprav'd Appetite of the Parent. How many Estates might then be sav'd, that now are wasted and consum'd by Prodigal Expensive Lewdness? And how many Families live like Brethren in Love and Amity, that are now only the Nurseries of Jealousy and Discontent?

And were these formidable Difficulties of Marriage but remov'd, and the Wife safe in the Love of her Husband, and He in the Affections of his Wife, and the Legitimacy of her Offspring, and not expos'd so desperately to the Fallity of her Love, and the

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Unlawfulness of her Progeny. Men then would entertain the Thoughts of Wedlock with the same Honourable Esteem as that Solemnity gain'd at its first Institution; which would no more be look'd upon as a State of Slavery but Freedom; as fit for Man even in his State of Innocence and Perfection; and a Blessing design'd to inhance the Pleasure, and multiply all the Comforts and Delights of Life. But such a happy Change as this can never in *England* be expected, till those Wise Resolutions which inspir'd the August Assembly of the Nation to surmount such Hardships as seem'd unconquerable, animate them again to establish such an Act against this dissolute Matrimonial Behaviour, as may restrain the Married Persons within Bounds of Modesty; which is the only means of promoting that Honourable Estate, which is now so wretchedly neglected; and of reviving its decay'd Felicities and Comforts. For now the Impunity of it has encourag'd its Violation to that degree

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degree of Assurance and Boldness, as if the Offenders were really Lawless, and out brav'd the Force of Civil Constitutions, and the Power of the Legislature to restrain them. For effecting which, it might not be amiss to contrive such a Method and Law, as might render Divorces less chargeable and difficult than now they are. For since all Divorces, with the Liberty of Marrying again, proceed from the Authority of Parliament; therefore if either there chance to be no Sessions for some time; or if there be, the Parliament has no Opportunity of dispatching such private Concerns; or if the Person injur'd be a Man of no Application, or be destitute either of Money or Time to go through with such a weighty Affair; in all these Instances he must be forc'd to Silence, and privately to struggle with his inward Burthen and his Grief, because he is not qualified for a Deliverance from the Difficulties of them. And therefore since our Saviour assures us, and the most Judicious



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cious Casuists attest, That upon the account of Fornication it is really lawful both to Divorce, and to Marry again, *Matt. v. 32.* why should not some more Easy Method be thought of, than now is practis'd, for relieving the Party injur'd and oppress'd? For sometimes Divorces have taken up the space of Four Years before they were accomplish'd; as that of the Lord *Ross*, which continued from 66 to 70. and that of the Duke of *Norfolk's* much longer. And certainly 'twere more desirable, that the speedy Dispatch of the *Jewish* manner of Divorce, *Be expelled from me, and free for any body else*; upon just Conviction, were allow'd, than such as are so Tedious and Expensive as those now mention'd.

Since therefore the happy Constitution of our Government takes care of all other Properties, it will not, I hope, hereafter suffer this which is most dear and tender, to be so easily invaded and ravish'd from us. Nor will

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will those Laws which are a Defence for an Ox or an Ass, overlook the Security of the most valuable Enjoyment, neglect the Rights and Interests of the Conjugal Bed, and not maintain the Staple Comfort of our Lives in all the Duties and Obligations of Matrimonial Constancy and Indearments.

*F I N I S.*



